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C O N F I D E N T I A L HILLAH 000385

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SADRIST SHAYKH, RELEASED FROM JAIL, TELLS OF ALLEGED PRISON ABUSE

CLASSIFIED BY: ALFRED FONTENEAU, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, REO,
AL-HILLAH, STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a private meeting in Najaf on December 27, a high-ranking Sadrist shaykh recently released from prison told Moqtada Al-Sadr that while in prison, he was tortured and the Koran was defiled, Sadrist sources reported to SET Najaf local staff. The shaykh also expressed to Sadr his desire to see the new Iraqi Government take control of all Coalition detention facilities, and execute Saddam Hussein. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Shaykh Mohammed Al-Rubae, a high-ranking lieutenant of Moqtada al-Sadr, met the cleric in his Najaf home on December 27 after the shaykh's release from prison, Sadrist contacts reported. (Note: It was not clear from the sources if Al-Rubae was being held in a Coalition- or Iraqi-run detention facility. End note.) Al-Rubae was first arrested after the August 2004 fighting between Coalition forces and Sadrists in Najaf. He was released shortly afterwards, and arrested again in June 2005. He was released a second time on December 26.

[1](#)3. (C) Al-Rubae reportedly told Sadr that he had been tortured in prison, and that he had witnessed the Koran being desecrated in the jail where he had been kept. In a discussion of the political process, Al-Rubae and Sadr reportedly agreed that the new Iraqi Government must gain control of all detention facilities from coalition forces.

[1](#)4. (C) Sadr reportedly asked Al-Rubae about other members of his following in prison. Al-Rubae delivered a letter from one of the incarcerated Sadrists. Sadr and Al-Rubae also reportedly agreed that Saddam Hussein should be executed, and that Baathists should be banned from participating in the political process.

[1](#)5. Comment: Reports of alleged torture and Koran desecration by those in Coalition and Iraqi detention facilities are not new. Regardless of the veracity of Al-Rubae's report to Sadr, it is unlikely that the cleric will miss an opportunity to use these allegations to criticize the Coalition, demand a withdrawal of all non-Iraqi forces, and lobby for more Iraqi control of detention facilities. End comment.

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